



July 24, 2003

**Cranston doctor facing charges over drug samples is
accused of diluting vaccines**

**Wallace Gonsalves allegedly diluted vaccines and falsified lab test
and vaccination reports submitted to Immigration officials**

A federal grand jury has charged **Wallace Gonsalves**, a doctor who practiced in Cranston, with product tampering and drug adulteration, alleging that he diluted vaccines for measles, mumps, rubella, and varicella virus. The grand jury also charged Gonsalves with falsifying reports submitted to the Immigration and Naturalization Service about vaccinations and about the results of lab tests performed for immigrants.

United States Attorney Margaret E. Curran, Mark Dragonetti, Resident Agent in Charge of the Food and Drug Administration, Office of Criminal Investigations, Joseph Moraski, Special Agent in Charge of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Inspector General; Robin Avers, Special Agent in Charge of the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement; Kenneth R. Jones, Inspector in Charge of the U.S. Postal Inspection Service; and Joseph A. Galasso, Special Agent in Charge of the Internal Revenue Service, Criminal Investigations Division, jointly announced a 30-count indictment, which the grand jury returned yesterday in U.S. District Court, Providence.

A summons will be issued for Gonsalves, 62, of 2 Sandy Brook Court, Warwick, to appear for arraignment. He is free on \$100,000 bond after being charged by complaint on July 7

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with illegally selling drug samples to **Anthony Albanese**, the owner of Cameron's Pawtuxet Pharmacy. Those charges are still pending against both Gonsalves and Albanese.

Vaccines allegedly diluted

The indictment returned yesterday charges Gonsalves with product tampering, alleging that between March 2000 and August 2002, Gonsalves tampered with a product by diluting vaccines for measles mumps, rubella, and the varicella virus. It alleges that he acted "with reckless disregard for and extreme indifference to the risk that another person would be placed in danger of death and bodily injury."

Based on the same alleged conduct, the indictment also charges Gonsalves with adulterating drugs. Those counts allege that he failed to properly store and maintain vaccines and that he "diluted the vaccines."

False statements alleged in lab test and vaccination reports

The indictment alleges that Gonsalves made 26 materially false statements to an officer in the Immigration and Naturalization Service. Gonsalves allegedly falsely reported on 14 occasions that he had received "negative laboratory test results for syphilis and HIV tests," and that he falsely reported to the INS on 12 occasions that vaccine requirements had been fulfilled for patients.

The indictment charges Gonsalves with two counts of tampering with a consumer product, two counts of adulterating a drug, and 26 counts of making a materially false statement to a federal official. An indictment is merely an allegation and a defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

Upon conviction, the statutory maximum penalties for the offenses charged in the indictment are: tampering with a consumer product – ten years imprisonment and a \$250,000 fine; adulteration of a drug – three years imprisonment and a \$50,000 fine; making false statements to a federal official – five years imprisonment and a \$250,000 fine. Exact sentencing for any defendant who is convicted would be determined on the basis of federal sentencing guidelines, which take into account such factors as the specific nature and impact of an offense and a defendant’s criminal background, if any.

The following agencies participated in the investigation that resulted in the indictment: the **U.S. Food and Drug Administration, Office of Criminal Investigations**; the **U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Inspector General, Office of Investigations**; the **Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement** (formerly the Immigration and Naturalization Service and the Customs Bureau), the **U.S. Postal Inspection Service**; the **Internal Revenue Service, Criminal Investigations**; the **Rhode Island Attorney General’s Medicaid Fraud Control Unit**; and the **Rhode Island Department of Health**.

Assistant U.S. Attorneys Luis M. Matos and Lisa Dinerman are prosecuting the case.